

Critical Articles in Australia Produce Pro-American Backlash

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Three articles containing some of the harshest criticism of life in the United States seen in a newspaper of general circulation here in years have produced a strong pro-American backlash among readers.

The articles, by Dr. Frank Knopfelmacher, senior lecturer in psychology at the University of Melbourne, were published this week in The Australian, a widely respected, nationally circulated newspaper. It is part of the group here and in London, headed by the Australian publisher Rupert Murdoch, but it

eschews the sensationalism of other Murdoch publications such as the popular British weekly News of the World.

Dr. Knopfelmacher, a controversial figure known for strong anti-Communist and pro-American views in the past, particularly criticized the American academic community as being "by and large, seekers after the fast buck."

His targets ranged from the drug scene and danger in the street ("walking up Broadway at night with my wife at my side I felt queasier even than on night patrols during the war") to the qualities of President Nixon's foreign affairs adviser, Henry A. Kissinger ("intellectually quite mediocre").

Newspaper Backs Away

After receiving numerous disapproving letters from readers, the newspaper backed away from the series in a long editorial Thursday saying that the editors did not endorse Dr. Knopfelmacher's "startling new anti-American views." It also published a detailed rebuttal by its Washington correspondent, Sam Lipski.

Dr. Knopfelmacher, who said

he left Czechoslovakia 23 years ago with "a beautiful exit visa" in his pocket, prepared the series after his most recent visit to the United States, which lasted three months.

"From the moment of arrival in the United States," he wrote, "my faculties were bombarded daily, hourly, every minute, by loathsome signs and symptoms which a social scientist's mind cannot but decode almost automatically as evidence of social crisis and disorganization."

Of the American intellectual community he said: "Many American academics offer themselves for sale and, like skilled courtesans, they're usually willing to change their position to satisfy the varying tastes of different customers—ranging from the C.I.A. and the

White House, with its variable occupants, to private corporations and revolutionary or Communist governments and agencies."

Questioning the value of the American commitment to defend Australia, Dr. Knopfelmacher declared that the United States was "incapable of defending, effectively, anybody anywhere."

"There are voices coming from America that things are getting better, that all is well," he said. "Most are the voices of hired men. We must not forget that loyalty and disloyalty in America are just so many salable commodities."

The Australian's editor Adri Deamer, said all the numerous letters received "strongly anti-Knopfelmacher."

To accommodate the strong rebuttal by its Washington correspondent, the newspaper postponed the advertised start of a series on a correspondent's visit to China.

Mr. Lipski, who said he was a friend and student of Dr. Knopfelmacher, declared that "the results are not yet in and that 'some things are getting better' in areas of American life criticized by the psychologist."

"It is true that you have to be careful after dark in the streets of Washington," Mr. Lipski wrote, "but even here there has been a marked change in the climate since we came two years ago. Crime is actually going down, fear of it is decreasing, the heroin addicts are slowly being taken off the streets for treatment."

"New York is still a bad scene," he said, "yet I repeat that New York is not America."

"History leads me to believe the United States does have inner resources for renewal and change that have not been exhausted," he said.